

*The CHARACTER and BLESSEDNESS
of those who die in the LORD;*

Represented in a

S E R M O N

PREACHED at

BRIDGEWATER,

JANUARY 6th. 1748;

On Occasion of the

D E A T H

Of the REVEREND

Mr. John Moore, M. A.

WHO

Departed this LIFE *December 31.*

Aged Seventy Six.

By THOMAS AMORY.

L O N D O N:

*Printed and Sold by J. WAUGH, at the Turk's
Head in Gracechurch-street; and Mrs. COD-
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W. Musgrave.



D. E. A. T. H.

Mr. John Moore, M.A.

Deceased this 1st December 31.
Aged seventy six.

By THOMAS AMORY.

LONDON.

Printed and Sold by J. Warren, at the Turk's
Head in Old Church Lane; and by J. G. D.
Kington in Bridgewater Road, and
The Strand.

REVEL. xiv. 13.

And I heard a voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours; and their Works do follow them.

VERILY there is a reward for the righteous; and verily there is a God who judgeth in the earth, is declared in plain language both by Reason and Revelation. That a most wise and good God, who hath made us with capacities for a happiness arising out of the perfection of knowledge and goodness, a perfection we cannot attain in the present life, must design us for another state, wherein the great end of our creation may be fully answered—That our heavenly Father, who exercises and approves the virtue and obedience of his children by severe trials, temptations, and sufferings throughout this life, will not permit their filial piety and obedience thus approved to *perish* unrewarded in the grave—And that an almighty, most

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wise and righteous *Governor*, who does not ~~ex-~~
~~actly~~ proportion happiness or misery to good
or ill desert here, and whose dominion reacheth
beyond the grave, will in a following state make
his subjects happy or miserable, in proportion
to his approbation or abhorrence of their con-
duct—These are truths clearly taught by the
Reason of every considerate mind, and general-
ly received by mankind in all ages. Yet though
Reason bear so express a testimony to a future
state, and to the happiness of the good therein,
the imperfection of their best obedience, joined
with their ignorance of what may be included in
the comprehensive designs of the great Gover-
nor of the moral world, make it very desirable
to have their hopes, as to so important an event,
ascertained by the express declarations of their
great Lord, in regard to the nature, degree,
and duration of the happiness laid up for them.
God our heavenly Father, to the inexpressible
satisfaction of the sincere Christian, hath con-
descended to do this in the Gospel, assuring
^d glory, honour, and immortality, to a patient
continuance in well-doing: and to the voice of
Reason, which says the pious, the virtuous, the
obedient must be approved of God, and they
whom God approves must be happy, is joined
a voice from Heaven, which in a manner more
clear and encouraging, pronounces, *Blessed are*
the dead who die in the Lord. Blessed are the
pious, the grateful, the obedient, though exer-
cised throughout their lives with difficulties and
suffer-

sufferings; yea, though their adherence to truth and goodness may cost them every worldly interest, and life itself; though like their great Master and Pattern they may expire amidst the violence of torments, and the insults of their persecutors, still it is an unshaken truth, that they are *blest*; since according to the promise delivered by the Spirit in *Isaiab*, *They rest from their Labours, they enter into Peace, and rest in the bed of Death*. When they die an everlasting period is set to their *Labours* and *Sorrows*, and *their Works follow them*, or attend them into the other world, *αρεσκουσιν μετ' αυτων*, where from the infinite munificence of their almighty Sovereign, they receive an everlasting reward of happiness, in degree proportioned to the degrees of their fidelity and love while on their trial.

As I am to discourse on this divine oracle on occasion of the Death of a worthy Friend, and your late honoured Pastor, who now rests from his Labours, without confining myself to their strict meaning, as connected with the prophetic vision, I shall treat this general truth which they contain——The *Blessedness of those who die in the Lord*, as resting from their Labours, and receiving in the next state the reward of their good actions in the body——To render our meditations on it more useful, I shall,

I. Briefly show you what is included in this Character of dying in the Lord, or who the

the Persons are, that by this divine declaration are assured of *Blessedness*. And

II. Represent the *Blessedness* promised to such, and enjoyed by them. *They rest from their Labours, and their Works follow or attend them.* God grant what shall be offered to your consideration may prevail with every one to possess himself of the *Character*, that he may enjoy the *Blessedness*!

I. I am briefly to show you what is included in *dying in the Lord*, or to describe the Persons who by this divine oracle are assured of *Blessedness*. Their *Character* may be comprized under the *three* following heads.

I. They have *deliberately* and *seriously* chosen *Christ* for their *Lord*, and *devoted* themselves to the *obedience* of his Gospel. ^a Deeply sensible of the guilt and desert of their sins, and their need of a *Saviour*, they have heartily embraced the Gospel salvation, on the reasonable conditions with which it is offered. Upon a thorough conviction of the *right* God has in them, of the *infinite importance* of his favour, and of the *goodness* and *obligation* of those commands which he hath given them by his Son, they have cheerfully and intirely submitted to his authority, and taken his precepts for their rule of life, And clearly apprehending the *insignificancy*, in point of happiness to an immortal spirit, of all the separate interests and pleasures of this bodily and momentary life, and the immense value of that

^a John vi. 68. Acts ii. 37. Matt. xi. 28.

that everlasting happiness which our Lord promises to the pious and obedient, they have fixed it, as their only important concern in life, to be approved of God, and happy for ever; and firmly resolved on *living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

We cannot *die in the Lord*, if we have not been his in life; until we have thus deliberately taken Christ for our Master, and heartily-resolved upon following him, we are not his disciples. While we are *undetermined* as to this great affair, we are at best but *almost Christians*, and can be but *almost saved*. For can we think our Lord will judge those worthy to be owned by him as his faithful servants, and to be rewarded with eternal life, who although he had so greatly obliged them by leaving Heaven, and dying to promote their eternal happiness, and had encouraged their coming to him by the promise of everlasting felicity, yet would never thoroughly resolve to come to him? The way by which they, who were not educated in the Christian Faith, declared their subjection to Christ, was, after their believing in him, being baptized in his name. The way in which they who have been baptized, and devoted to God through Christ in their Infancy, and educated in the Christian Religion, are to manifest their acceptance of Christ as their Saviour and Lord, and their *voluntary* subjection to him, is, after they

^e Tit. ii. 12, 13.

^f Acts xxvi. 28.

they are come to a full resolution of living according to the Gospel, dedicating themselves to God and Christ at his *Table*, in the institution which represents *the new Covenant in his blood*. Until they have thus fully resolved, and given this proof that he is their Lord, they can have no claim to the privileges and rewards of his servants.

And it is not enough to enter ourselves into his service. But,

2. They who would hope for the happiness of *dying in the Lord*, must *live in obedience to him*. He himself hath expressly declared, *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the Will of my Father who is in Heaven*. In the verse before my Text, they who *die in the Lord* are thus described, *Here is the Patience of the Saints; here are they that keep the Commandments of God, and the Faith of Jesus*. And St. Paul assures us, *God will render to all according to their deeds*. It is also added of those whom the Text pronounces *blessed*, *they rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them*; they have therefore laboured in the service of God, and done good works, since otherwise their good works could not have followed them. Convinced of their *constant dependance upon God*, and *increasing obligations to him*, that his hand upholds their souls in life, his bounty gives them all things they enjoy, and his kind influences maintain the divine life with-
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in them; they *acknowledge* by daily devotion, prayer, and praise, the constant goodness of God, and their continual dependance, cherish a lively *gratitude* for his favours, and *concern* to be approved of him, and supplicate the continued supplies of his Bounty and Grace; as well as devote the *Lord's Day* to these employments.

Having chosen the Son of God for their *Master* and *Saviour*, they study his Word as their *Rule* of living, and his Life as their *Pattern*, expect acceptance with God through his death, and by the faith of his resurrection are continually animated in the pursuit of glory, honour, and immortality. Persuaded that a ^k *righteous Lord* must love *righteousness*, a good God ^l *whose tender mercies are over all his works*, and a Redeemer who loved the world so as to die for it, must delight in, and can only approve true goodness, they live justly, ^m *do unto others, as they would have others do unto them*; and love their Neighbours as themselves. By alms and acts of charity ⁿ *they lay up treasures in Heaven*; and put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness and long-suffering. And fully sensible of the superior excellence of the pleasures of the mind, of goodness and devotion, they will never, that they may more freely enjoy the mean pleasures of the body, destroy the *Reason* or *Purity* of their souls, but as ^o *strangers upon earth abstain*
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^k Psal. xi. 7. ^l Psal. cxlv. 9. ^m Matt. vii. 12, xxii. 39.
ⁿ Luke xii. 33. Col. iii. 12. ^o 1 Pet. ii. 11. 1 Cor. ix. 25.

from fleshly lusts which war against the soul; and are temperate in all things; and as those who are risen with Christ seek the things which are above, where Christ siteth at the right-hand of God, and set their affections upon them. Apprehensive of the necessary connection between resembling a holy God, and being approved by him, and between having our tempers suited to the pleasures of Virtue and Piety while here, and enjoying compleat blessedness from the perfection of these in the heavenly world, they ^p *cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* And if at any time through negligence, or the surprize and violence of temptation, they are betrayed into sin, they recover themselves by speedy repentance and amendment; and can never think themselves the accepted servants of the Lord, till they have ceased to do the works of his enemy, and returned to the obedience of his laws. Thus they, who *die in the Lord and are blessed,* while ^a *they live,* live unto the Lord. And to compleat their character,

3. *They continue this course of obedience unto death.* It is not enough to have begun well, but we must ^s *endure to the end,* if we would be saved. *The just shall live by faith; but if he draw back God will have no pleasure in him.* It is only to a patient continuance in well-doing, that God has promised to render glory, honour, and immortality. If we would *die in the Lord*
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^p 2 Cor. vii. 1.
Heb. x. 38.

^a Rom. xiv. 8.

^r Matt. xxiv. 13.

we must be his servants until death, otherwise we should die in sin. The length of the way must not prevail with us to give out, for we must not be ^f *weary in well-doing, or faint in our minds, or having begun in the spirit end in the flesh.* Though difficulties, persecutions, and death should rise to view, and threaten us if we proceed, still we must proceed, and not ^t *count our lives dear, so we may finish our course well.* *Here is the Patience and Faith of the saints.* This tries and approves our fidelity. The Text particularly relates to those who *died for the testimony of Jesus.* And if the fear of *sufferings or death* will not excuse us in deserting our Master's service, much less will temptations of *pleasure or interest.* Holiness and goodness appear unchangably excellent and amiable in the eyes of God, and he can never cease to approve these, and condemn the contraries; unless therefore we would be condemned by him, and lose the happiness which follows his approbation, we must never cease to be what he approves, nor become of a contrary character. Yea, the nearer we draw to the other world, the more urgent is the necessity of holiness, since ^u *without it no one shall see the Lord,* and since it is the very temper of happiness; and a blind man might as well hope to be happy, in being surrounded with fine paintings and gay prospects, as the wicked, and sensual, and unholy, in the *holy and heavenly Jerusalem.* We

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must

^f Gal. vi. 9. Heb. xii. 3.^t Acts xx. 24.^u Heb. xii. 14.

must therefore not only begin, and proceed for some time, but finish well ; not only *live*, but *die in the Lord*.

Let this suffice to explain the *Character* of those who are *blessed* in and after death. Before we proceed to the next general head, let us all seriously ask ourselves, Is this our character? Have we come to a full resolution of obeying Christ, given up ourselves to him in covenant, and made good the dedication? Is the case doubtful? Let us immediately put it out of doubt. Is the contrary evident? Let us immediately begin to be the Lord's. It is of infinite importance—Our final well-being, our happiness to eternity depends upon it ; a happiness compared with which the world is a trifle ; since it comprehends a release from every evil, and the possession of every good fitted to make happy a reasonable and immortal Being, and worthy of the great Governor of the world to bestow on his faithful servants. Let us

II. Attentively consider this *Blessedness* afforded to the *saints* who *die in the Lord*. They *rest from their Labours, and their Works follow them* ; or as the Original might be better rendered, *accompany them* into the next state. The *first* part of this blessedness, *rest* from all their *Labours*, is enjoyed by them *immediately* after death, throughout the *intermediate* state between death and the general resurrection. The *second*, the *reward* of their *Labours*, is in *part* also enjoyed *immediately*, but most *fully* after the resurrection,

rection, since the Day of general Judgment is the time fixed by God for *rendering to all according to their Works*. The good Works of the saints *accompany* them into the other world, and they are in part rewarded immediately, in the *holy disposition* which they have established here, and which is there *perfected*; in the *full approbation* of their own *consciences*, and the transporting assurance of the *approbation* of God and of the *Redeemer*, and in those pleasures and employments which can render *perfect spirits* happy, amidst the best company, and in the presence of God and of Jesus; though their compleat glory and happiness must be waited for until the resurrection. Then they shall be *publickly* approved before Angels and Men, and receive as a reward of their good Works *done in the body*, bodies *glorious, spiritual, incorruptible, and immortal*. Let us take a distinct view of their happiness, as promised by the *voice from Heaven*. *They rest from their Labours, and their Works accompany them*. I shall present them as distinctly as I can, though they will naturally run into one another.

1. *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their Labours*. That the *present* should be a life of *labour*, was the wise and righteous * determination of God, immediately after the Fall; and that with this short life shall *end* all the labours of the sincerely pious and good, and *eternity* reward them, is the most
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* Heb. xii. 23.

* Gen. iii. 19. Rom. ii. 10. 1 Pet. i. 7.

1 Cor. xv.

gracious appointment of his infinite goodness,
 † *the gift of God through Jesus Christ.*

During the present life, though the *happiness* of a *reasonable* Being consist in *action*, yet in all action there is *labour* and *weariness*. We are quite spent with the labour of a few hours, and must refresh ourselves in sleep, the image of death, that we may be able with any spirit or pleasure to go through the work of the returning day. The bulk of mankind are obliged for the support of life to submit to *continual* labours; and if the rich will preserve health and vigour, they must subject themselves to *voluntary* labours; which though necessary to preserve the stock of strength and vigour, for the present seem to exhaust it. This labouriousness of our state was wisely appointed by God, as a *corrective* of the strong passion in our frame for *sensual* good; and as a *trial* of the strength of our love to God and to our duty, which manifests itself in our chearfully overcoming labour and weariness in the service of God. But all these labours end in death. The soul after dropping this cumbrous body of flesh, becomes a *pure* spirit *light* and *active*, is all perfect life and perfect action. The longest journeys through the universe to contemplate the works of God, or execute his orders, are performed by it without the least weariness, and the longest ingagement in the noblest exercises can never tire it. The pure spirit hath no longer the incumbrance of a gross body to be draged about, nor any foreign wants which it
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must drudge to supply, but its pleasures all arise from the exercise of its immortal powers on objects ever near, or of which, if distant, it can put itself in quick possession without the least fatigue.

How *laborious* now are the *pursuits of knowledge*! The wisest of men from his experience pronounced ² *much study a weariness to the flesh*. The spirits are exhausted, the brain tired, and the head aches through continued application of thought. The materials of knowledge must with great pains be collected from distant parts, the drudgery of learning dead or foreign Languages be submitted to; and the eyes spent with reading, as well as the mind tired with attending, if we would gratify in any tolerable degree the noble desire of knowledge, and enjoy in any measure the divine pleasures of *truth*, of the *knowledge of God* and of his *Works*. But all these labours cease in death. The soul having burst through its inclosure of flesh, no longer ² *feels after God*, but *sees him*. The philosophy of nature, which is now hidden from our gross senses, lies all open to the nicer view of the pure mind; and conversations with angels and perfect spirits give without labour that knowledge, which we here drudge for many years in vain. The delight of continually discovering new truths, the most grand and beautiful, is now enjoyed without the price of labour. The soul is never tired with the longest and most attentive meditation, but to think

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² Eccl. xii. 12.

² Acts xvii. 27: Matt. v. 8.

is its life and pleasure. A journey from one end of the world to the other, for searching out the wonders of the divine perfections exerted in it, costs not the labour of a few steps now. And then the bodies, which will be united to their souls at the resurrection, will be of a nature suited to this activity of the mind; no longer animal, weak, and wasting, but ^b *spiritual, powerful, and incorruptible*.

Again—The practice of Religion and Virtue is at present attended with *great Labours*, from which *they who die in the Lord* happily rest. Faint are the impressions of spiritual objects upon us, in comparison of the impressions of sensible, which forcibly turn away the mind from attending to the other. Would we at any time affect our hearts with the Divine Presence, Perfections, or Benefits, rise to a suitable veneration and gratitude, and keep alive a cheerful concern to please God, it will cost us great striving to fix our minds in serious meditation, to resist the distractions of sense, and enjoy in any degree the satisfactions of devotion: and after all our labour, it is but a little while we can enjoy them, the body prevails, we must attend to it, and not without fresh labours, at proper intervals, can we return again to the exercises and pleasures of devotion. *They who die in the Lord rest from these Labours*. The distractions of the animal body cease for ever on its being dropped into the grave. *The pure in heart see God*. Their clear perception
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of his immediate Presence, glorious Perfections, and inexpressible Love, fills their souls with the most ardent sentiments of veneration, gratitude, and love, and it is rather with difficulty that they turn their thoughts to any other subject. They are also ^c *with Jesus, and behold his glory*; and souls disposed like theirs find it no difficulty when they see him, to admire and love and praise him, in the most rapturous manner. And who that loves the Redeemer can doubt whether they are happy?

The practice of Virtue also is attended while we are in the body with great *difficulties*, especially in the beginning and in *some tempers*. Constitution and inclination often lie cross to Reason and Virtue, and the *selfish* affections to the *benevolent*. When we see and approve what is right and good the inclination to the pleasures and interests of the body strongly draw us another way, and we find it difficult to preserve a lively conviction of what is amiable and good, and to adhere to it. A constitution disposed to anger, makes it difficult for us amidst provocations to preserve the command of ourselves, and a steady regard to the rules of Truth, Justice, and Charity. Inclinations naturally strong to the pleasures of the senses, render Chastity and Temperance difficult attainments. A strong passion for reputation makes it difficult to bear well contempt or slander; while to a covetous disposition, a trifling instance of Charity shall cost more than considerable benefactions to the

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^c John xvii. 24.

generous. When with labour and resolution we have in some degree mastered these constitutional propensities, yet at the appearance of their objects they will revive, and by their opposition render the satisfactions of right acting very imperfect; often draw us aside to guilty compliances, break the peace of our consciences, and oblige us to a continual attention of watchfulness, if we would preserve the piety of our minds and our self-injoyment. But *blessed are the dead who die in the Lord*, for at death they drop their body of sin. All those inclinations rooted in the body, which are wholly suited to the present animal life, and the frequent occasions of sin, cease for ever, and can no more distract, incumber, or pollute the soul. Passions and prejudices no longer darken the mind, or pervert the Will, rendering it laborious to judge or act well; but the pure spirit in the clearest manner apprehends what is good, and with its intire Will chuses, adheres to, and practises it. The noblest instances of Virtue are as easy as the least. The soul ever does what it approves, and what God approves. Humility, Goodness, Friendship, a clear conviction of what is most amiable, and the most free and uniform practice of it, are the temper of the soul, and its unlaborious employment and delight. All imperfection ceases, for *when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part will be done away*, and *Charity*, or the love of God, and all reason,

reasonable Beings, *never fails* in its exercise or perfection.

Again—Our *affection* to others, and the ties of *nature* and *blood*, often subject us to the most *painful labours*, and severe uneasinesses. Their troubles are our afflictions, their wants our poverty, and their ill conduct our torment. Though we have taken care of our own behaviour, and from that receive the satisfactions of Goodness and Integrity, yet still we must suffer by the follies and faults of those *nearly* related to us. A Husband, a Wife, a Brother, a Child, dissolute, guilty, and unhappy, pain us in a very tender part. But *blessed are the dead who die in the Lord*, for they *rest* from all pains of this kind. The affections on which they are founded are wisely adapted to the present state, exciting us to do our utmost for the persons who are the objects of them, but when this purpose can no longer be answered, they give no more uneasiness, being felt no more. The *unembodied* spirit loves in exact proportion to the moral excellence of the object; and as it sees all whom it loves, and who deserve to be happy, as happy as it can wish them, and none wretched but those whom infinite Wisdom and Goodness adjudge deserving of misery, the sufferings of such give it no more pain, while the happiness of all the well-deserving give infinite pleasure. In the other world the saints enter perfectly into the sentiments which their great Master expressed, when he said, *“He that doth the Will of God,*

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the same is my Sister, and Brother, and Mother.

Further—The *sicknesses* and *pains* of these mortal bodies give a *laborious* exercise to the Patience, Virtue, and Submission of the good, but *blessed are the dead who die in the Lord*, for *they rest from these Labours.* † *They hunger no more, neither thirst any more; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.* A disordered body shall no more confuse or distract the mind, fill it with imaginary terrors, and disable it for the pleasures of Virtue and Piety. Fevers, Gout, Stone, every tiresome, and every tormenting disease end in death. The soul having dropped its fetters, put off its diseased body, and got out of its prison, with inexpressible pleasure and surprize finds itself at once in possession of immortal health, and perfect vigour and activity; its prospects unclouded, its joys unimbittered, and its happiness ever growing, without possibility of decay, interruption, or end.

Finally—The *opposition, ill treatment, and persecutions*, which the faithful servants of Christ often suffer here, from the ignorant, superstitious, bigotted, hypocritical, violent, or profane, and from which death for ever frees them, render it just to pronounce them *blessed who die in the Lord.* The *voice from Heaven* designed chiefly to express this part of their blessedness.

St.

† Rev. vii. 16. xxi. 4.

St. Paul also having mentioned the tribulations and persecutions of the good, calls their deliverance *Rest*. ^s *To you who are troubled Rest, with us.* In this world they who adhere faithfully to Christ's authority, ^h *call him alone Master,* and having honestly endeavoured to discover his Truths, and his Will, propound them to others without a servile regard to established prejudices and errors; such faithful servants of Christ are now often loaded with reproaches and ill usage by the ignorant, the prejudiced, and the artful, and treated as *Heretics*, and *Seducers*. They who struck with the beauty of true goodness recommend it in the strongest manner, as essential to the favour of God, and real happiness, are reproached as enemies to the *Grace* of the *Gospel*, and to the *Righteousness* of *Christ*, which they persuade men to imitate. And they who content with the love of God, of Jesus, and of mankind, with *substantial* Virtue, and a heavenly conversation, despise *superstitious* observances, *whimsical* austerities, and *uncommanded* strictnesses, and converse like their Master in an *easy* manner, are, like him, slandered as ⁱ *wine-bibbers, gluttonous, and the friends of Publicans and Sinners*, whom they endeavour to bring in love with true Religion. Yea, slanders, contempt, and lighter injuries, are not the worst usage good men receive from a wicked world. They have been imprisoned, famished, tortured, and expired amidst the rage of flames, and the insults of their enemies; and treated as
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^s 2 Thess. i. 7.^h Matt. xxiii. 8.ⁱ Matt. xi. 19.

not worthy to live, ^k of whom the world was not worthy. The Son of God, and the best of men, led the way in this course of sufferings, and hath been followed by his Apostles, and an innumerable company of Martyrs and Confessors. But *blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, and who die for him.* ¹ *They who kill the body, have after that no more that they can do.* The fidelity and constancy of the saints thus approved, render them infinitely dear to God, and inexpressibly happy in his full approbation, and in their own consciousness of their integrity and steady goodness. The moment they enter the other world, the smiles and approbation of God and of Jesus infinitely overpay the reproaches of men, and the friendship of Angels compensates the hatred of wicked mortals. Their ^m *spirits return to God and Jesus, smile at the rage of their enemies, and triumph in absolute ease, immortal life, the favour of God, the presence of Christ, and fulness of joy.* *Blessed then indeed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their Labours; and* ⁿ *those light afflictions which are but for a moment, are not worthy to be compared with the glory revealed to them.* And this naturally leads my thoughts to the

2d. part of their *Blessedness, their Works follow, or attend them.* Under the last head you saw part of their reward, and I shall now chiefly lead your thoughts to that part of their
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^k Heb. xi. 36. xii. 1. ¹ Luke xii. 4. ^m Acts vii. 55.
ⁿ Rom. viii. 18. ² Cor. iv. 17.

Blessedness which is distinct from what we may call the *natural* consequences of their *dying in the Lord*, and which is the reward with which the *free* goodness of the best of Beings crowns their Patience, Fidelity, and Obedience. *Rest from their Labours* is equally enjoyed by all who *die in the Lord*, but their degrees of *positive* reward and happiness *differ*, according to their having more or less abounded in works of Piety and Charity while upon earth. Our Lord the Judge expressly distinguishes the *reward of a Prophet* from that of a mere *righteous man*. He pronounces those *blessed who suffer for Righteousness sake, because great is their reward in Heaven*. He commands by charitable actions to provide *ourselves a treasure in Heaven*; yea, rather than not thus procure a treasure there, *to sell what we have that we may give alms*. And his Apostle declares, *God loveth the chearful giver*; and that he who in this kind of actions *soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully*; and that *God will render to all according to their Works*. Reason also joins with Revelation in this encouragement, *always to abound in the work of the Lord, and to perfect holiness*. For the same reason that God loves goodness and rewards it, he must love the highest degrees of goodness most, and most largely reward them. The saint who hath reached the most exalted heights of Piety and

° Matt. x. 41. v. 12. Luke xii. 33. ¶ 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7.
Rom. ii. 6.

and Virtue is in the temper of his soul qualified for a higher degree of happiness, in a more perfect knowledge and love of God. And the saint conscious to the most eminent improvements in Virtue and Piety, to the most numerous instances of charity and doing good, to the compleatest command over his passions, and to the promoting most considerably the happiness of mankind, especially their everlasting happiness; this saint must of consequence be *happier* in the *reflections* of his own mind, and in the *presence, friendship* and *happiness* of those to whose welfare he hath greatly contributed, than another good man can be, who cannot reflect on so useful a life, nor in the world of bliss see so many, whose love he hath merited, or to whose felicity he hath contributed.

We have therefore not only the strongest encouragement to be the Lord's, to *enter* his service and *persevere* in it, but to be always *abounding in the work of the Lord*; to strive that our knowledge of God, our faith in him, our love and gratitude may be the most rational, fervent and uniform; and for this purpose to ^a *pray always, in every thing to give thanks, and to watch unto prayer*. Not only to be charitable, but to ^r *devise liberal things*, to seek out occasions of doing good, and contrive ways to be most extensively useful. Not only so to govern our inclinations and passions, as to keep ourselves from gross transgressions of the

the laws of Righteousness, Purity, and Temperance, but to keep every passion in a constant easy subjection to Reason and Religion, *'perfect holiness in the fear of God*, be heavenly minded, and have our *heart and treasure in heaven* : since every instance of goodness, every victory over our passions, every advance in Piety, will produce to us a *higher* degree of glory and blessedness to eternity ; and we can no way so well employ our time, wealth, thought, or diligence, as in the service of this Lord, who will not suffer the least sincere endeavour to please him, the least instance of charity and doing good, not even a *Cup of cold water given to a Disciple*, to go unrewarded. The *best* we can hope from the other pursuits and enjoyments of life, distinct from Religion and Virtue, and from all expences on the mere show of life, is, that they will load us with no guilt to be borne by us into the other world. If they do not, through any irregularities, attending the acquisition or possession, lessen our happiness in the everlasting state, they will no way augment it. All such purposes and pursuits for ever end in death. Whereas every act of charity we perform, every improvement we make in Piety, Meekness, Humility, Patience, Benevolence, Purity, Temperance, and the like ; and every good action we do, yea, every good intention, which failed in execution solely through want of opportunity, all these shall go with us into the other world, render us

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more

^s 2 Cor. vii. 1. Matt. vi. 20, 21. Col. iii. 1—4.

more dear to God, and raise us to a more distinguished rank of glory and happiness for eternity.

The particular ways in which this is to be effected, and the certainty of the thing, we may learn from the following instances.

It is one part of the blessedness promised to the faithful disciples of Christ, that they shall *see God, and be where Christ is, and behold his glory*; that is, will be blest with the clearest knowledge of God and of Christ, and the most transporting assurances of their favour; shall enjoy the largest and brightest views of the divine Perfections and Works, and from these rise to ravishing sentiments of veneration, wonder, gratitude and love, shall triumph in the glory and bliss of the Redeemer, and praise him in the most exalted manner. This is a happiness that admits of very different degrees. The knowledge, devotion and transport of an *Archangel* must be greatly superior to those of an *Angel*; and of consequence in proportion to our greater improvements in goodness and devotion, to our greater diligence and delight in meditating on the Perfections, and studying the Works and Word of God, and thinking of, and loving an unseen Saviour, in proportion to these will be the discoveries God will make to us of his Excellencies, and of his Works, and that Jesus will make of himself and of his love, and our happiness in a more extensive knowledge and exalted devotion.

To

To those who in this life have injoyed to any degree the pleasures of Truth, and of divine Love, I need not prove, that they are the most valuable satisfactions; and can they with greater encouragement to cultivate a disposition for these, and prefer them now before the mean pleasures of the animal life, than that the degree, in which they shall for ever possess these satisfactions in Heaven, will be determined by their present improvement in a pious and heavenly temper; and the more they thus resemble the Angels now, the nearer shall they be like them in bliss for ever?

Again—The joys of Friendship, of mutual communications of Knowledge and Happiness, and of being imployed in executing the great designs of the divine government for the happiness of God's moral creation, are part of the bliss good men will injoy after death; and in this respect their *good Works* now will *follow them*, that their injoyment of this happiness will be measured by the degrees of their goodness and usefulness here. ^u Our Lord the Judge has determined, that the *diligent and faithful* servant, who made his *one pound ten pounds*, should be set over *ten Cities*; while he who improved it but to *five*, was made Governour but of *five Cities*. His Apostles also he assures, for their incouragement to an active zeal and patient perseverance in his service; ^w *ye are they who have continued with me in my Temptations, and I appoint unto you a Kingdom,*

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as

^u Luke xix. 16.^w Ibid.

as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my Table in my Kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. They therefore who while on their trial have been *most* pious and useful and charitable, being consequently rewarded by God with an elevation to *higher* degrees of Knowledge and Goodness in the other world, will be qualified to fill *higher posts* in the heavenly Polity, and to bear *nobler parts* in executing the divine designs. Being qualified also to communicate more Knowledge and Happiness to others, they will naturally enjoy *more exalted* satisfactions in thus *communicating good*, and be happier in the *greater esteem and love* of the other blessed spirits; whose esteem and love will ever be determined by the degrees of moral excellence.

Finally—The resurrection of our *bodies* to *glory, beauty, power and immortality*, is a considerable part of the reward of our Works here, and in this respect our Works will follow us into the other world; that as ^x *one star differeth from another star in glory, so also will be the resurrection from the dead*. The body of the lowest saint will in glory and beauty be ^y *like to our Lord's own most glorious body*; yet as notwithstanding this resemblance, the glory, majesty, and beauty of the Son of God, and the happiness he receives through his glorified body, is greatly above that of the most exalted saint, so the nearer we resemble the Son of God in fervent Piety, active Goodness, chearful Meekness

^x 1 Cor. xv. 41.

^y Phil. iii. 21.

ness and Patience, and in a heavenly Temper and Conversation, the more shall the glory, and beauty, and perfection of our spiritual bodies, and the happiness we receive from them, resemble the glory and happiness of the Son of God; and consequently the more honourable shall be our rank and distinction for ever. Would we therefore be *distinguished* for immortal glory, beauty, and happiness in the *Court of Heaven*, let us now adorn our souls with the *moral* beauties in the greatest lustre, with Piety, Goodness, Compassion, Sweetness, Modesty, Humility, and the like; and then as nearly as we now resemble our perfect Pattern in those amiable qualities, so nearly shall the glory and perfection of our bodies hereafter resemble his, when *the righteous shall shine as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father*.

Well then might the *voice from Heaven* say, *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord*, since death at once frees them for ever from all evil and suffering, and removes them to a state of *unerring Knowledge* and *established Goodness*; where they are *present with the Lord Jesus*, see *God face to face*, converse with *Angels*, and joyfully expect the general Judgment, wherein before innumerable Angels, and the whole human race, their approved Piety and Obedience shall be acknowledged and applauded; and they in their resurrection-bodies, cloathed with high degrees of immortal glory, beauty, and power, suited

suited to the degrees of their diligence and fidelity in the work of their great Master, shall begin a state of compleat happiness, which shall last, not barely for some *thousands* of Years, or *millions* of Ages, but *for ever*: and when innumerable Ages have rolled by witnesses to their perfect felicity, shall know their happiness to be as far from an end as at the beginning; shall know it to be *unalterable* as the *love* and *power* of the unchangeable God, *sure* as his *faithfulness*, and *lasting* as his *everlasting* dominion. *Happy indeed are the dead who die in the Lord!* Who would not live to him, and die in him? “ *Blessed be the God and Father*
 “ *of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of his abundant*
 “ *mercy hath begotten us again to a lively*
 “ *hope, by the resurrection of Christ from the*
 “ *dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and un-*
 “ *defiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved*
 “ *in Heaven for us, who are kept by the power*
 “ *of God through faith unto salvation. Blessed*
 “ *also be the Lamb that was slain, even*
 “ *Jesus who loved us, and died to wash us*
 “ *from our sins in his own blood, and make*
 “ *us Kings and Priests unto God. Salvation,*
 “ *Blessing, Glory, and Praise be to the eternal*
 “ *fountain of all good, the Father of our Lord*
 “ *Jesus Christ, and the Father of mercies, and*
 “ *to his well beloved Son for ever and ever,*
 “ *who thus reward the imperfect Love and*
 “ *Obedience of a short life, and after moment-*
 “ *ary Labours grant everlasting Rest and infinite*
 “ *Blessed-*

“ *Blessedness.*” Let us now close this subject by mentioning a few of the Inferences we should draw from this most delightful truth, delivered by a *voice from Heaven*, assured by the promise and oath of the unchangeable God, and by the dying testimony, and glorious resurrection, and ascension of his Son. And

1. We should learn hence to value in the greatest degree the *Christian Religion*, which thus supplies the strongest consolations under the evils of life and the fears of death; pronouncing those *blessed that die in the Lord*; and by a *voice from Heaven*, by the most express declarations of almighty God, and the death and resurrection of his Son, assures us they *rest* from all their *Labours*, and are entered upon *everlasting* happiness. To struggle with difficulties, to labour under afflictions, pains, and disappointments, is inseparable from our mortal condition. To have these lightened by the ^b *assurance* that they are all directed by infinite wisdom and goodness, for exercising and increasing our Virtue and Piety; and that our bearing them well, during a short life, shall *work out for us a far more exceeding even an eternal weight of glory*, is a privilege *peculiar to Christians*. After a short life to be subject to the stroke of death, to have a *natural dread* of it, and to be obliged to enter, and pass through the gloomy vale, without *seeing* whither it leads, this is alike the lot of all the children of men. To be expressly assured, and
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^b Rom. viii. 28. Heb. xii. 5. 2 Cor. iv. 17.

by a voice from Heaven, that death puts not an end to our Being, but only to our sufferings, that it immediately introduces us into a state of perfect rest and self-injoyment; and that our bodies, from which our souls part reluctantly, shall be restored to them with infinite advantage, and be prepared to be the seats and instruments of compleat and immortal felicity; these are encouragements for which we are wholly indebted to the Gospel of Christ, and which should indear it to us in the greatest degree.

Reason will indeed prove to us a future state, wherein it shall be well with the righteous; yet some of the greatest men, among those who had only *Reason* to guide them, had a mixture of doubt and uncertainty with their belief of a future state. ^c *Socrates*, who reasoned the best of any of the *Philosophers* in proof of it, supports himself with this hope at the approach of death; that either the soul perished with the body; and if so, to be annihilated was better than to live with bad men; or else, which he believed and hoped, the soul was immortal, and then after being released from the body, the spirits of good men went to the gods, and to the abode of good spirits, and were happy in their friendship. Their ^d reasonings also in proof of this great truth were often weak, at other times too subtle for common apprehensions, and generally discovered a great deal of doubt in their own minds, as well as left a great deal in the minds of

^c *Plat. Apol.*

^d *Plat. Phædon. & Tusc. Quæst.*

of their hearers: whereas *Christ* and his *Apostles* speak *plainly* and *peremptorily*, and without the least doubt and uncertainty on this most important subject; they assure us in the name of God our Maker, and by miracles prove he had impowered them to give the assurance, particularly by raising the dead, and *Christ* by rising himself from the dead, in confirmation of this doctrine, that the soul survives the body, so that men ^e *who kill the body can not kill the soul*; that when ^f *when we are absent from the body, we are present with the Lord in Paradise*; and that God will render glory, honour, and immortality to a patient continuance in well-doing. The meanest capacity can with ease and certainty apprehend, that if God our Creator declares we are made for another state, and that he will in it make the pious and obedient happy, this future life and happiness are *sure* beyond all reasonable doubt; and that God really commissioned his Son *Jesus* to make in his name these declarations, who not only wrought numberless miracles in proof of it, but who having sealed this truth with his blood, actually rose again on the third day to confirm the promise of a *general resurrection*, and of *life eternal*. Supported by these express assurances, the meanest sincere *Christian* can triumph over death in full hope of a glorious immortality; when the greatest *Philosophers* were suspicious and doubting.

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And

* Luke xii. 4. Matt. x. 28.

f 2 Cor. v. 1. Luke xxiii. 43. Rom. ii. 6.

And then the Gospel assures us of what the best Reason could not ascertain, that with the present life end all the labours and dangers of good men, and that immediately after it commence unalterable Virtue and Piety, and compleat and everlasting Blessedness. The wisestⁿ Heathen concluded that only a few eminently good rested from their labours in death, and were fixed in happiness. The generality of others, whose characters were *mixed*, and their goodness *imperfect*, they believed were tried again in another state, and not *fixed* in happiness till *compleat* and *established* in goodness. And without a Revelation we could not be assured that God would not thus dispose of us. Whereas we *Christians* are blessed with this glorious excitement to *live to the Lord*, and to *die in him*; that a *voice from Heaven* declares it as certain, and commands it to be written for the comfort of Christians in all succeeding times. *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord*, in that they *rest* immediately from all their *Labours*, and their good *Works* going with them are rewarded with *everlasting life*.

Let any serious person, desirous of satisfaction as to the state of men in the next life, read the best Writers unenlightened by Revelation; and after these read the Discourses of Christ and his Apostles, and then say, whether while the *one* leaves him *doubtful*, the *other* does not give him *absolute certainty*? And while the *one* at most allows him to expect some *low* degree of happiness,

ness, they know not well what, answerable to the shortness and imperfection of their Virtue, the *other* does not give the *most express* and *delightful* assurances of *complete* and *endless* felicity? How should *all* therefore, the *bulk* of mankind *especially*, who are not capable of long and close reasonings on this subject, but *alike interested* in it, as being in common subjected to labours, sufferings, and death, how highly should they esteem this Revelation, which by its divine encouragements cheers the soul under the greatest evils of life, and makes them scarce sensible; and darts in such a light through the gloom of death, as scatters all the horrors of it, showing it to be only a *short* passage to *everlasting rest*, and to an *infinite reward*.

II. What a *trifle* are all the *separate* cares and interests, and pleasures of this *short* life in comparison of this great concern, that we *live to the Lord*, and *die in him*; and thus secure an *everlasting* rest from all labour and suffering, and the possession of *perfect* and *never ending* happiness! Men are ⁱ *careful and cumbered about many things*, when really but *one thing is needful* and important. We are solicitous to ward off the evils, and to provide against the wants and inconveniencies of the present life, and generally look no further, when death without our care would soon put an end to all these, and at the close of life they would appear but like the uneasiness of a *dream*. We are eagerly engaged in the pursuit of wealth or pleasure, and if we

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succeed

ⁱ Luke x. 41, 42.

succeed here concern ourselves for no more, when supposing we prove most successful in the pursuit, a few days will remove us for ever from them, at death they will appear to us as if they had never been, and in the next, the *everlasting* state on which we are entering, will be found of no importance to our eternal well-being. On the contrary, the *injustice* by which we may have acquired them, or the *licentiousness* with which we have enjoyed them, will then hang heavy on our souls, and fill us with the most anxious forebodings of what will follow our making up so ill an account. Yea, supposing no other life, so many labours and difficulties attend the pursuits of wealth and pleasure, so uncertain is the acquisition, so short the enjoyment, and so certainly dashed with disgust, produced by the disappointment of our immoderate desires and expectations, and so soon do the shadows of death overtake us, and blot out the whole scene, that nothing in life were then worth much toil and anxiety. But how much more trifling must those temporal things appear, if compared with the concerns of an *immortal* Being, who is here on his trial for eternity, and who may so act his part in this scene as to be approved of his Judge, and happy for ever! And how astonishing is it, that such trifles can engage the generality to neglect the other, when even the hopes of Heaven would render them happier now, than the world can without these hopes, and the possession of it fully and for ever happy!

If

If *rest* be good, and security from evil be desirable, the *everlasting rest* of Heaven must be infinitely valuable, and worthy all our care to secure it. If life and pleasure be valuable, immortal life, everlasting pleasure must be infinitely valuable, and every thing else trifles. How do all the evils and all the joys of this short life disappear, when we read seriously our Saviour's Parable of the *rich man* and ^k*Lazarus*? Who can envy the *rich man* his being *cloathed in purple and fine linen*, and *faring sumptuously every day*; who can desire such a felicity? When the dream of life was so soon over, and followed with his awaking in *torments*. Who can think the *poverty and sores* of the pious *Lazarus* any great evils, when death so speedily cured him of both, and delivered him to *Angels*, who conducted him to *Paradise*, to the best company, and to the highest enjoyments? Who that knows himself made for immortality, can esteem any thing important to him but this, so to live, whether he be rich or poor, according to the instructions of his Sovereign, that whenever he dies he may die in Jesus, and after death be happy for ever?

III. Are they *blessed who die in the Lord*? Do they *rest from their Labours*, and do their *Works go with them* into the next state, and there receive an infinite reward? Let us all be persuaded to labour after this character. To be subject to labours and sorrows here is the lot of all; to have all these ending in death, and succeeded

^k Luke xvi. 19.

succeeded by perfect rest and eternal bliss, is the *privilege* of those only who *die in the Lord*. If you devote life to the pursuits of pleasure, wealth, or ambition, though you were successful to the height of your wishes, yet labour and vexation would inseparably attend you, and mingle with your sweets; and death after a few days put an utter end to your enjoymment, and turn you naked, disconsolate, and hopeless, into the world of recompences, where riches will not profit, where of guilty pleasures remain nothing but the stinging remorse and despairing remembrance; and where no distinctions take place, but those which are founded in *moral* goodness, in the imitation of our Lord, and serving him faithfully. Whereas if you immediately begin to *live unto the Lord*, from that moment you put yourselves in the way to be safe from every real evil, and sure of every proper good.

The labours and difficulties of life will be cheared by the expected rest and promised rewards of Heaven, and (as when you bear them well they will continually raise your hopes) will be changed into pleasures. The noblest satisfactions from the love and imitation of your Lord, from conscious goodness, advancing holiness, and approaching immortality, will fill your bosoms. The shortness and uncertainty of life, and near views of death, will give you no uneasiness, who can regard death as the final period of labour and suffering, and the introduction to consummate and immortal blessedness. The close of your mortal

mortal life will then be peace, and succeeded by life eternal. Whereas if you live forgetful of your Lord, and disobedient to him, the toils and sorrows of life will be aggravated by guilty reflections, and uneasy fears for futurity, and followed with the deserved punishments of the unseen world. If this world, for the sake of which you sacrifice the happiness of the other, can compensate you for those evils, and offer you a happiness any way comparable with the present satisfactions of Religion, and the rest and rewards of Heaven, in the name of *wisdom* stick to the world. But if it cannot, in the name of *God* be exhorted to quit a foolish and a ruinous course. Life is uncertain; if this day you will not live to Christ, before to morrow you may die out of him, and for ever miss Heaven. Come then to an immediate and full resolution for a life of Religion. Dedicate yourselves to God and Christ in the Christian Covenant, and fulfill without delay its conditions. The world cannot make you amends for the hazard you run by the least delay. Surprizing infatuation! We must earnestly intreat reasonable and immortal Beings, and intreat them in vain, to secure to themselves a rest from every evil, and everlasting blessedness; and not to trifle away a short life, their only season for securing it, and thus plunge themselves into an utter despair of being happy. You must *live to the Lord*, if you would *die in him*; and fill life with works of Piety and Goodness, if you would have it produce to you in the next state abundant fruits

fruits of compleat and everlasting happiness.

iv. This doctrine particularly recommends *early Piety*, that *our Works go with us* into the other world, since we may thus improve the whole of life for augmenting our happiness to eternity. Labours for acquiring wealth and distinction, expences on sensual pleasure, and time devoted to gay amusements, all these are at best *lost*, since neither of them attending us into the other world will procure for us the approbation or rewards of our Sovereign. Whereas all labours imployed in acquiring a knowledge of God, of Jesus, and of our duty, and establishing a pious and virtuous disposition; all our labours and expences in doing good, in relieving the necessitous, comforting the afflicted, well educating our Children, promoting the welfare of our Families, Relations, and Acquaintance, in the best discharge of relative duties, or in supporting and advancing the interests of Religion in the world; and all the time given to the pleasures of knowledge, goodness, and devotion; all these labours and expences, besides the present satisfaction and reward attending them, will *go with us* into the other world, and contribute to *raise* our station of glory and happiness to *eternity*. These *Works* will all *follow us*.

How should the Young therefore rejoice, that they may thus improve the whole of life, and immediately devote themselves to the study and practice of Virtue and Religion. If they thus

thus early enter themselves into the service of Christ, besides preventing the anguish of guilty reflections, and the difficulty of curing bad habits, besides finding the practice of Religion far more easy and pleasant, they will make the *whole* of this short life turn to infinite advantage in the next state. For whereas *late converts* have a very small part of life, that they can review with satisfaction, are stung with guilty reflections and remorse for innumerable instances of folly and ingratitude, and for having wasted a great part of life, are forced to struggle hard with inveterate passions and habits, and at last have little to be rewarded, and are *scarcely saved*; every day will yield those, who have been pious from their *youth*, matter for pleasing reflections, and bright hopes. The pleasure of doing their duty every day will be greater than the pleasures of sin; and when they conclude their time of trial, their *Works will go with them* into the other world, and cause their crown of glory to be of distinguished splendor, and their happiness of the most exalted kind; for ^k *as they have sown, they shall also reap.*

My *Young Friends*, if the world can make you offers like these, close with them; if not, be so much your own friends, be so grateful to God and to Jesus, as immediately to come to a full resolution for a religious life, and devote your selves to God through Christ. When you have thus *well begun*, the work will be *half done*, and the satisfactions you will experience,

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^k Gal. vi. 7.

in having entered the way to life eternal, will make you advance joyfully in it; and the excellence of your work, and the glorious hopes and reward before you, will change your labours into pleasures. If you ingage in other pursuits you will find your pleasures *few*, and dashed with *guilt* and *disappointment*, but your labours and disquietudes *many*; and death, instead of ending your sorrows, will bring you to the heighth of them. Your Works indeed will go *with you* into the other world, but only to sink you deeper into torment, and ¹ *better would it have been for you, that you had never been born*. But if you are wise in *early youth*, with deliberation, and seriousness to, *resolve* for a life of Piety and Virtue, *ratify* your resolutions at the *Lord's Table*, and *pursue* them in the steady practice of all goodness; from that time you are under the protection of a Sovereign, who will guard you from every real evil, and furnish you with every proper good; who will not suffer the least instance of faithful service to go unrewarded, but at the last great day, ^m will remember *all your Works of Piety and Labours of Love*, and from his Throne say to you before Angels and Men, ⁿ *Well done, good and faithful servants!* You have devoted the *whole of life* to me, and now a *whole eternity* is before you, in which you shall be *bappy*, and the *most* distinguishing honours in my heavenly Kingdom are yours!

v. From this doctrine we may learn the folly of delaying and trusting to a *death-bed repentance*.

¹ Matt. xxvi. 24.

^m Heb. vi. 10.

ⁿ Matt. xxv. 20, 21.

ance. According to our Text none can *die in the Lord*, but they who have *wrought* for him; and none have blessed *rest from their Labours*, but they who have *laboured* in the *work* of the Lord; and to have good *Works attend* us to be rewarded in the next state, we must have *done* them while *in the body*. Whereas they who trust to a death-bed repentance, continue thro' their whole life *out of Christ*, labour only in the service of sin, and work only the works of *unrighteousness*; and offer nothing to God at last, but some *fruitless wishes*, that they had laboured in his service, and some *promises* of working, when they are persuaded their time for it is quite expired. Would a thorough repentance on a death-bed avail to such for pardon and happiness, which the Scripture no where declares, yet such at that time is the weakness of their faculties, and their incapacity for close reflection, and continued thoughtfulness about spiritual affairs; such are the distractions of a diseased pained body, and of worldly affairs demanding a settlement, and so many the interruptions from the officious attendance of Friends, and the like; that it is of all times the *worst* they could ever fix on for such a work, and the least favourable for accomplishing it.

For my part I never saw a death-bed of a sinner, who *of purpose* delayed till the last, that was favourable for executing such a design; or on which what could, in any propriety, be called a *thorough repentance* was effected. Sinners in view of death are indeed terribly alarmed, sen-

sible they have near ruined themselves, and freely promise something, they do not know well what—and this is all. Nothing appears like such a *change* in the *heart*, as intirely to approve what is excellent and lovely in the eyes of God, and to abhor the contrary; nothing like that temper which is necessary to qualify them to be happy in the presence and love of a most holy God, and in the perfection of goodness. Besides, the Gospel contains no promise of an everlasting reward to *ineffective promises and resolutions*, extorted by the near view of death. It is the language of the New Testament, *• We must every one receive according to what we have done in the body; not according to what we wished we had done, but did not.* They are numerous instances of Charity which our Lord in the twenty-fifth Chapter of St. Matthew declares he will reward with life eternal; and those *Virgins, who slept while the Bridegroom tarried, and their Lamps went out*, and who afterwards awakened by the cry of his coming, in vain hurried themselves to be ready, but who came after the door was shut, crying, *Lord, Lord, open to us*; these are by him stiled *foolish Virgins*, and sentenced to *outer darkness, where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.* They therefore who think they will *cunningly* contrive to indulge their lusts, and enjoy all the pleasures of sin, yet by a *death-bed repentance* secure the everlasting rewards of holiness, are with all their cunning the greatest *fools*,

fools, for they deceive none but themselves, and that they do fatally. [¶] *Be not deceived*, says the Apostle, *God is not mocked, whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap*; and *blessed* only are they, who when they die *rest from their Labours* in the Lord, and who have works of Piety and Love to follow them.

VI. This doctrine is proper to cheer the good under all the *labours* and *sufferings* of life, and accounts for God's permitting them. They will *soon rest* from their *labours*, and the bearing and improving afflictions well shall [¶] *work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. Without trials and temptations our love and fidelity could not be approved, and without an approved fidelity we could not become so proper objects of the divine complacency, nor be qualified for so glorious a reward. And if *light afflictions*, which are but for a moment, work out a *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, God acts *wisely* and *kindly* in appointing them, and we ought to go thro' them *cheerfully*. Such is our present constitution, and so strong are our inclinations to sensible good, that was not our fondness for it *corrected* by afflictions, the best would be in danger of growing sensual in their tempers. Through inconsideration also we run into many faults, which afflictions correct by bringing us to humble and serious reflections. If then Vice be the disease and death of the soul, and Virtue and Piety its sound state; and if its immortal vigour and

and happiness will be proportioned to the degrees of its present healthfulness, we easily see, how that (to some strange) maxim is true, *Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth*: for though no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous, nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness, to them who are exercised thereby; and the fruit of righteousness is peace and life eternal.

Afflictions therefore considered in this view as discipline, are no proofs of God's particular displeasure, but rather of his paternal love. And if God exercise good men with afflictions, as he did *Job*, merely to approve, and heighten, and manifest his Piety, Integrity, Patience, and Resignation; or if we suffer for righteousness sake, for adhering to the purity of Religion, or to the steady practice of our duty, in these cases we are, according to our Saviour's command, *to rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is our reward in Heaven*. ^t St. Peter also directs us, *not to think it strange if a fiery trial befall us; when our faith and patience thus tried and approved, will be found to praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ*. There are no afflictions but we may bear well, no trials to which good men may be called but are designed by God to heighten and approve their Virtue; and we can make no improvement in goodness, but

^t Heb. xii. 6, 11. Isa. xxxii. 17.

^f Matt. v. 12.

[†] 1 Pet. iv. 12. i. 7.

but it will be infinitely rewarded: it can not therefore in Reason be thought unaccountable, if God through out this short life exercise his children with difficulties and afflictions, since *here is the patience of the saints*; and when they die *they rest from their Labours, and their Works follow them*. It is said also of them ^u *who came out of great tribulations, that they are before the Throne of God and serve him day and night in his Temple; and he that sitteth on the Throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the Sun light on them, nor any heat, for the Lamb who is in the midst before the Throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes*. Is not this great promise enough to drie every tear? And would any wise person wish to be exempted from an affliction, which though at present grievous, he might yet cause to yield such glorious fruits of joy, and life eternal? Can any reasonable person complain of labours, from which he will so soon rest in death, and for which, after death, he shall be infinitely recompensed? Are they not, ^w as St. James says, to be accounted *happy who endure temptation, since when they are tried they shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him*? Let us but seriously meditate on the *rest* of Heaven, and all the labours and sufferings of life will appear light and easy.

VII. Are

^u Revel. vii. 14.

^w James i. 12.

VII. Are the *dead blessed who die in the Lord*? This should moderate our grief for those, who thus *rest from their Labours*. Are they removed from the joys of this life? They rest also from its sufferings; sickness, pain, folly, and vice for ever end with regard to them, and can no more disturb their self-injoyment. Is their time of *labouring* in the Lord ended? Their past *works* of Piety and Obedience are gone with them into the other world, to be rewarded with eternal happiness. Are they removed from *our intimacy and love*? They have exchanged the best company here for infinitely better, and soon shall we meet with them again, greatly improved, and never to part more.

That we have a right to this strong consolation under the death of our *Friend*, and your *worthy Pastor* deceased, from the *agreement* of his *character* with that given in the beginning, of such as *die in the Lord*, is evident to all, who have known how *boldly, justly, and unblamably* he behaved himself among you, for more than *Thirty Years* that he was your *Pastor*, and for *Fifty Years* that he acted as a *Tutor* in this *Town*. During which time he particularly distinguished himself, as a most tender Parent, a kind and generous Relation, and a compassionate and bountiful Friend to the Poor, without distinction of Parties. The vigorous health which he enjoyed to so great an age, having, during *Seventy Years*, never been confined one day to his bed by sickness, was both a *proof* and *reward* of his exact *temperance*.

ance. And his chearfully imploying so long a life in promoting the Faith and Practice of the Gospel, among a Body of Christians, where worldly encouragements are generally far from considerable, is a sensible proof of his Piety, and of his hearty affection to the Person, and Cause of *Christ* his great Master.

His Genius and his Inclination led him chiefly to delight in the *Study of Nature* and of the *Mathematicks*, in which he was a great proficient; and these Studies assisted him more justly to conceive the *astonishing greatness* of the *divine Works*, and the *excellency* of those *few and simple*, but most *comprehensive* and *beneficial Laws*, according to which the *divine Mind* moves, actuates, and preserves this mighty frame of things. Hence he became qualified to receive more grand and worthy ideas of the boundless Perfections of the great Author and Preserver of all, to form his Hearers to a more rational and exalted Piety, as well as the Students under his care to an exactness of Reasoning, a love of Knowledge and Truth, and an evident and firm persuasion of the immense Perfections and constant Providence of the Deity.

And let me add, the *freedom* with which he treated his Pupils, his encouraging an *inquisitive* temper, and so easily bearing an opposition of sentiments, at an age too, which very often makes persons look on this as an intolerable presumption in *Youth*; these were substantial proofs of his great *modesty* and *love* of *Truth*; and at the same time most proper

means to encourage the searches, and improve the intellectual abilities of those under his care. And the figure made in the learned world by several educated under him, is a proof of the wisdom of this method, and of his abilities as a *Tutor*.

But I must remember that I am speaking to numbers, who knew much better his character and worth, than my late acquaintance with him would allow me to do. I shall therefore only add to this *imperfect sketch*, which I leave you who knew Mr. Moore better to fill up, the mention of one good quality, which I had particular opportunity to observe, his *great moderation* and *charity* in relation to persons differing from him in some Doctrines of Religion, which have been warmly disputed, and by many treated as fundamental. With pleasure and admiration I heard him deliver these just, modest, and christian sentiments. “ I am old,
 “ and must soon appear before my great Judge ;
 “ and under my own many errors, sins and
 “ defects, have only to plead as a ground for
 “ his mercifully forgiving and accepting me,
 “ an *honest* and *impartial* concern to know and
 “ do his Will. And shall I by judging and
 “ condemning my Brethren for differing from
 “ me in sentiment, many of whom with
 “ *equal* sincerity and regard to the authority
 “ of Christ, and with *greater* application and
 “ abilities have examined these points, and af-
 “ ter all seen reason to think and speak differ-
 “ ently from me ; shall I thus destroy my own
 “ plea

“ plea for the divine acceptance, and by judging them condemn myself? Nor Prudence, Justice, nor Christian Charity will allow me to do it.” Excellent sentiments! Were they more common, we should not only have more Peace, Love, and real Piety among Christians, but more *Truth* in relation to controverted Doctrines; none being so likely to find Truth, as persons of this disposition, freely conversing and debating with each other.

When such was the *Temper* and such the *Life* of our deceased Friend, are we not justified in regarding that Distemper, which *without pain* put an end to his useful life, as a *favour* of Heaven, excusing him from those labours and sorrows, which according to the course of nature would otherwise have embittered his life, if further protracted; and removing him to the world of perfection and immortality? Thither his *Works* follow him, and there his long and faithful services in the Ministry will be crowned with glory and life eternal—There his pious and laborious searches into the Works of God, while he was here, are rewarded with the brightest and largest views of them, and with the pleasures of the most exalted devotion to the infinite Original of all that is great and good—There his love to his *Saviour* while *unseen*, is recompenced by seeing him *face to face*, by just apprehensions of his native excellence, his amazing condescension, and dying love, by his feeling transports of admiration, gratitude, and love to him, and

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receiving

receiving full assurances of his great Master's approbation—And there his generous affection to all, *who love our Lord Jesus in truth*, is rewarded, by his admission to the society and friendship of *spirits made perfect*, where Error, Prejudices, and uncharitable Contests are for ever unknown, and the only contest is, who shall most love God, Christ, and one another.

Let none therefore, not even his *nearest* Relatives, mourn for him, ** as they who have no hope*; but believing *that those who sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him*, that their spirits after a happy residence *with Christ in Paradise*, where with a pleasing assurance they expect the consummation of all things, and their own full reward, shall at the end of the world descend with Christ to Judgment, receive their bodies raised *glorious, spiritual, and incorruptible*, be honoured with the declared approbation of their Judge before Angels and all mankind, and then ascend with him to Heaven, and *so ever be with the Lord*. Believing these glorious truths, let us comfort ourselves, and encourage one another with these words.

VIII. The truth declared by the *voice from Heaven* should reconcile the *pious and good*, the lovers of the Lord, to the thoughts and approaches of their dissolution. We must *die*, that we may be *blessed*, *yea, says the Spirit, that we may rest from our Labours*, and receive the reward of our *Works*. Labour and suffering are in a greater

* Luke xvi. 22. xxiii. 43. 2 Cor. v. 8. xii. 4.
Phil. i. 23. 1 Thes. iv. 13.

greater or less degree the inseperable attendants on mortality ; and till we have put off these bodies, we can not be intirely freed from evil, or in full possession of good. The tired labourer wishes for rest, persons in pain for ease, and the faithful diligent servant for the full reward of his labours ; and should not we chearfully obey our Master's voice, when he calls us from labouring in his Vineyard, and from enduring pain and fatigue, to receive a large reward for our Work ? When spent with the labours of the Day, we every Night with pleasure throw ourselves into the arms of *sleep*, the image of death, in hope of refreshment, and of awaking to new life and vigour with the returning Day. And why should we not as chearfully commend ourselves to the *rest* of the grave, and to the arms of death, when assured by *Jesus, who died and rose again*, of awaking in the morning of the resurrection to immortal life ; and when a voice from Heaven for our encouragement hath declared, *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, &c ?*

It is true, as long as we are capable of labouring in the service of so good a Master, and of increasing our interest in the rewards of Heaven, we may chearfully continue labours that will be thus rewarded. And surely when spent with labour, and worn out with sickness and pain, we should as chearfully accept our Master's call to *rest*, and to our *reward*. How desirable to be for ever released from sickness, pain, and weariness ! To experience no more labour and difficulty in the pursuit of Truth, the practice of Good-

Goodness, or the exercises of Devotion! How desirable to receive the full approbation of our Master, to enter his presence, and be blest with his smiles! How desirable to be *like the Angels* in Knowledge, Goodness, Devotion, and Felicity! How desirable then should it appear to those who have *lived to the Lord, to die in him!* Nothing but a foolish fondness for life, which if its evils did not cure, one would think the near prospect of Heaven might; or else a doubt as to our title to the promised reward, can make one loth to die, who heartily believes in God, and in Jesus. And if only this last cause makes death appear terrible, we should soon by reforming what occasioned our uneasy fears of death, and by greater diligence and faithfulness in our Master's service, assure our title to his favour and rewards; and then the language of our souls would be, *Come Lord Jesus, Come quickly!* It is true, *it does not yet appear what we shall be;* we can not as yet fully apprehend the nature and worth of the heavenly blessedness—But surely, we feel the evils of the present life enough to know, that an everlasting freedom from them is most desirable; and we have injoyed enough of the pleasures of Knowledge, Devotion, and Friendship, and Goodness, to be assured that the compleat injoyment of these pleasures will make us exceedingly happy. And surely we have seen also enough of the Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness of God in the frame of the World, and in the course of his Providence, to be assured,

red, that they will be *perfectly happy*, whom he *designs* to make so ; and blessed indeed to whom he grants *rest* from their *Labours*, and whose *Works* of Piety and Obedience he rewards with the munificence of a God.

Finally—Are *the dead blessed who die in the Lord*? Let us imitate the Faith, Piety, Patience and Charity of those who having died in the Lord are now inheriting the promises ; and ^a *be stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as we know, that our Labour will not be in vain in the Lord.* Have we been acquainted with such, been witnesses to the holiness and usefulness of their lives, and perhaps also to the serenity or triumph of their dying hours? Is their memory dear to us ; and do we regret their absence? Let the remembrance excite us to a diligent imitation of their virtues ; let their happy *close* of life recommend their *course* of life to us, and our regret for their absence engage us to cultivate that temper, which may fit us again to enjoy their society, who are now infinitely improved in the world of light and love. Though their spirits are dislodged, and their bodies mouldering in the dust, their Piety and Virtue are not lost, nor their hopes and happiness buried in the grave. Their ^a *spirits are returned to God who gave them ; when absent from the body they are present with the Lord*, and rejoice in the happy fruits of their labours they already possess, and in the certain hope

^a 1 Cor. xv. 58.

^a Eccles. xii. 7.

hope of the yet more glorious recompence they shall receive at the resurrection.

As therefore we would *die the death of the righteous*, and have our *latter end like theirs*, let us live the life of the righteous, giving our main concern, application, and diligence to this great design. ^b *The world passeth away, and the fashion thereof, but they who do the Will of God abide for ever.* While others therefore are the slaves of worldly wealth, or pleasure, or ambition, let us learn from the examples of our pious Friends, to be the chearful devoted servants of Christ. Let us set no bounds to our ambition of the honours of the great Day, or to our love of the riches and pleasures of Heaven. Let us make every day witness to a more compleat conquest over our passions, to more numerous instances of doing good, and more exalted degrees of gratitude, resignation, and love to God; and we shall then find the labours of our Master's service cheared with superior pleasures here; and when we follow our pious Friends into the invisible state, shall be ^c *joined to the spirits of the just made perfect*, injoy an eternal rest from all evil, and enter on the perfection of happiness, as our *portion for ever*.

God grant what has been offered to our consideration may greatly contribute to make us all so wise and happy! Amen.

^a 1 John ii. 17.

^c Heb. xii. 23.



The E N D.